



Ingleborough

National Nature Reserve

Front cover image: Ingleborough from Scar Close

© Natural England / Robert Goodison

Back cover image: Whernside from Souther Scales

© Natural England / Whitfield Benson



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Welcome to Ingleborough National Nature Reserve

Ingleborough is one of the famous Three Peaks of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Together with Pen-y-ghent and Wharfedale, this mountainous area is renowned and protected for its special wildlife, geology and spectacular scenery.

Here you will find flower-rich meadows and pastures, heather-clad moors, ancient woodland and some of Britain's finest 'limestone pavements'. This leaflet includes two walks that have been planned to help you enjoy the Reserve.



Glacial erratic boulder on Scar Close

The heritage of Limestone Country

The dramatic limestone landscape of Ingleborough has been created by the forces of nature, and modified by the hand of Man. Formed from sediments laid down in a shallow tropical sea over 300 million years ago, the limestone rocks have been eroded ever since. Glaciers on the surface and water underground have combined to create wide, U-shaped valleys, extensive limestone pavements and a vast network of caves and passages.

Limestone pavements have a typical block (clint) and fissure (grike) appearance. In the sheltered, cooler and humid conditions of the grikes you will find plants such as wood anemone, bluebell, garlic-scented ramsons and many types of fern. These are the remains of woodland that once covered this area.



Limestone fern

The limestone grasslands are full of colourful wild flowers between spring and autumn. Look out for early-purple orchid, wild thyme, rock-rose, bird's-foot trefoil, limestone bedstraw, harebell and small scabious.

In contrast to the limestone grasslands, some parts of the Reserve, like High Lot, are covered in thick deposits of peat. Bog mosses, heather, bilberry, purple moor-grass and bog asphodel are plants typical of these areas. You may hear a red grouse calling or see a short-eared owl hunting.



Red grouse

People have lived in and farmed this area for thousands of years. On the Reserve there are the remains of abandoned settlements, old limekilns, many miles of dry-stone walls and field barns that are typical of the Dales' landscape.



Lime kiln at Philpin Sleights

Sulber Nick Walk

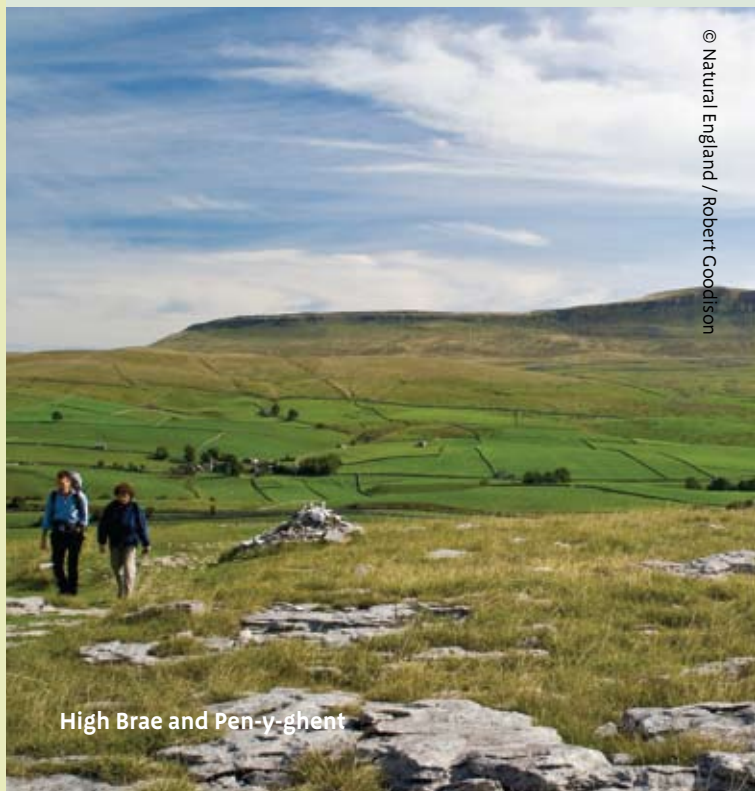
Distance: 9 kilometres (5.5 miles)

Walking time: two and a half hours

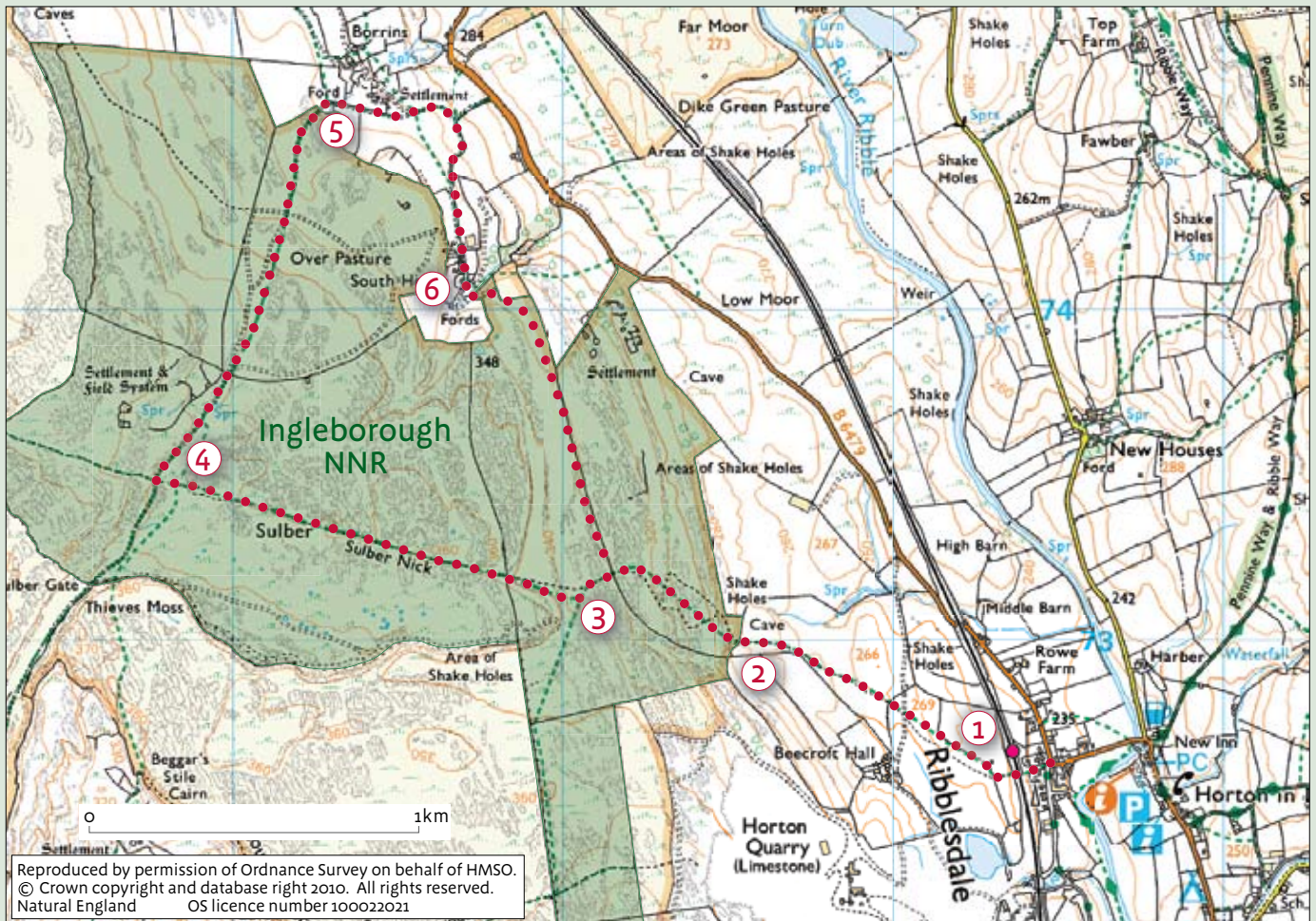
Difficulty: medium, with some quite steep sections.

This walk takes you through the superb, flower-studded limestone pastures of High Brae and Sulber. You may be able to see the native cattle that are helping to improve the biodiversity of these pastures. Great views open up of Simon Fell and Ingleborough as you walk up Sulber Nick, and it is worth a short detour to the southern edge of Sulber to look across the dramatic landscape of Crummack Dale.

Follow the marker posts with the yellow band or yellow arrows.



High Brae and Pen-y-ghent



① You can start this walk from the railway station or National Park car park in Horton in Ribblesdale. Note that the walk is not waymarked until you reach the National Nature Reserve entrance.

② From the railway station follow the main Three Peaks public footpath westwards for approximately 0.75 miles until you reach the Reserve entrance.

As soon as you cross into the Reserve, the mosaic of limestone rock and species-rich

grassland show you have entered 'Limestone Country'.

For much of the year High Brae pasture is grazed by native cattle. These hardy cattle breeds, such as the blue grey and belted Galloway are able to thrive on the rough grazing and can cope with the harsh upland climate.

③ Continue on the public footpath through High Brae and through the gate into Sulber.

On Sulber there are stands of heather on flatter, poorly drained ground where peat has accumulated. By reducing sheep numbers and introducing cattle grazing, the purple-flowered heather and pink-flowered cross-leaved heath have thrived.

On a fine day, the view down Crummack Dale is stunning. To the west is Long Scar with its miles of limestone pavements, and to the east is Moughton where juniper grows amongst the rocks.

④ Walk through Sulber until the footpath joins the bridleway to Clapham. Follow this bridleway northwards towards Borrins, passing through Over Pasture.

Below the bridleway are several 'flushes' where lime-rich water seeps from the underlying limestone rock. Here you will find moisture-loving plants such as the insect-eating common butterwort, the white flowered grass of Parnassus and the beautiful bird's-eye primrose with its pink flowers. Its leaves have a distinctive mealy underside.

⑤ Before reaching Borrins you will leave the Reserve at the northern end of Over Pasture. Go through the gate and continue along the bridleway track, first to the right (east), and then when the track goes down to the road, take the track that swings round to the right (south) towards South House Farm. Please keep to the public rights of way across this land.

On the limestone pastures you will find plants like wild thyme, salad burnet, bird's-foot trefoil and fairy flax. Where rock-rose grows keep a look out for the elusive northern brown argus butterfly, which lays its eggs on its leaves.



Blue grey on High Brae

⑥ Pass through the farmyard at South House Farm into a small field, across a small stream and over the stone stile back into the Reserve. Now leave the public footpath and continue southwards up the slope and then along the level waymarked path through High Brae. This will join up with the main Three Peaks footpath, where you should turn left (east) and return to the railway station at Horton in Ribblesdale.



Northern brown argus on rock-rose

Ribblehead Quarry Walk

Distance: 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles)

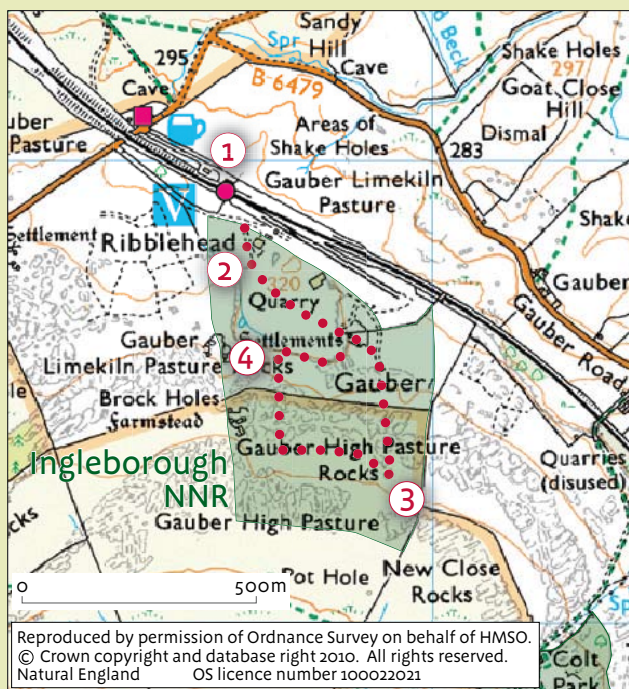
Walking time: one hour

Difficulty: easy to medium, with some rocky stretches.

Take notice of warning signs and keep away from the quarry edges, which are not fenced and may have loose rocks. There are also ponds with deep water. Please be aware of traffic on the short road section.

This walk takes you through a disused quarry that nature is reclaiming, limestone pavement and the remnants of a Viking-type settlement.

Follow the marker posts with the green band or green arrows.



Bird's-eye primrose

© Natural England / Robert Goodison

① You can start this walk from either the car parking area at the quarry entrance or from Ribblehead railway station. The walk is not waymarked until you reach the National Nature Reserve. From the station, walk down the access track to the main road (B6255), and turn left. Go under the railway bridge and then left again up the track running parallel with the railway line. The entrance to the Reserve is on your right after approximately 400 metres (0.25 miles).

② Pass through the gate into the quarry and follow the waymarkers. Bear left around some old spoil heaps, then right before climbing up a rough stone slope. Pass through a gate and keep to the left hand track. Follow the waymarkers through another gate and onto the open hillside of Gauber High Pasture.

The quarry was first established in the late 19th Century to supply crushed limestone for the Settle-Carlisle railway. It was also used in agriculture, County Durham's iron and steel industry and in household products such as toothpaste, cosmetics and scouring powder.

Since 2000, when the quarry became part of the Reserve, wildlife has been allowed to reclaim it. As part of the restoration plan, pools, boulder fields, and stone piles were created, and areas of bare rock left exposed so that the quarry resembled how a post-glacial landscape might have looked over 10,000 years ago. With limited tree planting, the rest of the quarry was left for nature to re-colonise. You can see this process has begun and now special plants like the bird's-eye primrose have appeared in wetter areas. On the stony quarry floor in summer you may see birds like oystercatcher, redshank, or ringed plover. The magnificent raven, with its distinctive 'cronk-cronk' call, can be seen and heard amongst the cliff faces.

③ The waymarked route bears right and passes around and then through an area of limestone pavement until it meets a narrow path. The walk turns right at this point to a gate in the drystone wall. However, a short detour of about 20 metres straight ahead will take you to an ancient farmstead.

You can see the foundations of three buildings, surviving as low walls. The farmstead was occupied in the 9th Century and probably had roofs made of thatch or turf. The largest, rectangular building was where the inhabitants would have eaten and slept. From excavated remains, the other buildings may have been a kitchen and a workshop. Coins, knife blades



Ribblehead Quarry and Park Fell



Bird's-foot trefoil

and sharpening stones have been found here. Fragments of the original drystone walls surrounding the farmstead still remain.

④ Returning to the waymarked path, pass through the gate and then follow the green marker posts. The quarry face is directly to the left (north) of the path, so take care. Continue on the path and you will meet a track where you should turn left to rejoin your earlier route. Walk back through the quarry to the Reserve entrance.



Juniper with berries

Planning your visit

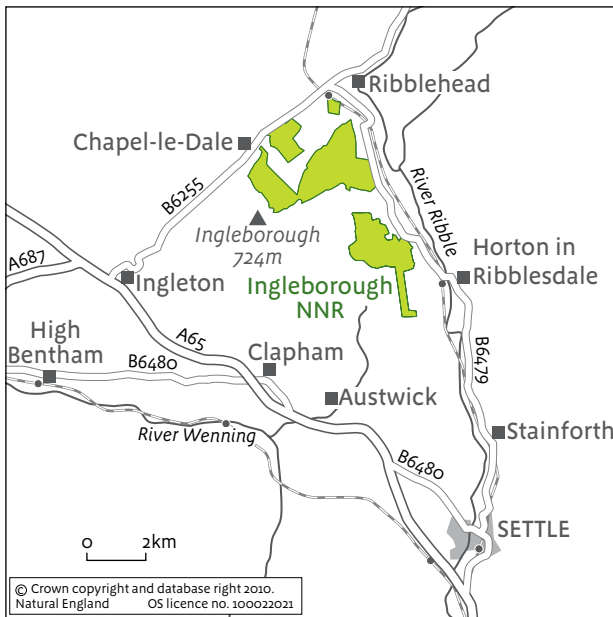
The Reserve is situated in a remote and often deserted mountainous area. It rises to an altitude of 650 metres and can be subject to rapidly changing weather conditions including high winds, heavy rain, hill fog and snow.

For your own safety keep to the waymarked routes. Paths on the National Nature Reserve are mostly unsurfaced, and the terrain is often steep and uneven. There are many caves and potholes on and around the Reserve and unless you are part of a properly equipped, experienced and supervised group, please stay well away from them. Take extra care on the limestone pavements, especially in wet weather.

The weather on the Reserve can change rapidly, so plan ahead and always carry water-proof clothing and know how to use a map and compass. Please ensure that you tell a responsible person exactly where you are going and what time you will return. There is no mobile phone reception on many parts of the Reserve. Please note that there are no toilet facilities on the Reserve. The nearest public toilets are at Horton in Ribblesdale and Ingleton.



Globe flowers at Colt Park



Help us to look after the Reserve

Please follow any advice notices you may find and follow the Countryside Code; respect, protect and enjoy. More information can be found at www.naturalengland.org.uk

Please keep dogs under close control to avoid disturbing ground-nesting birds and grazing livestock.

There are over 25 miles of old and fragile walls on the Reserve, please do not climb on them.

Please do not camp or light fires.

Colt Park Wood and the limestone pavement at Scar Close have no public access. A permit is required to visit these areas. These are available free of charge from the Senior Reserve Manager on 0300 060 6000.

How to get there

Car and cycle parking is available at the entrance to Ribblesdale Quarry from where it is possible to walk to the rest of the Reserve using waymarked trails, public footpaths and Open Access land. Additionally, there is a National Park car park (with toilet facilities) at Horton in Ribblesdale, and roadside parking on the B6255 at Ribblesdale and near the Reserve entrance in Chapel-le-Dale.

The Settle-Carlisle railway stations at Ribblesdale and Horton in Ribblesdale are within walking distance of the Reserve.

Dalesbus operates a service in the area throughout the summer, which includes links to the train stations. For more information and timetables please visit www.dalesbus.org

Like to know more?

The NNR is covered by OS Explorer Map OL2 Yorkshire Dales – Southern & Western areas

On our website, you will also find details of two other walks on the Reserve. For more information on these or the wildlife, geology, landscape and history of Ingleborough National Nature Reserve visit www.naturalengland.org.uk

Alternatively, please contact the team responsible for looking after the Reserve on 0300 060 6000.

Work to look after this Reserve involves Natural England, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. It would not be possible without the support of the local farming community.

